To Your Door

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To Your Door

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Summary

Will sleepwalks all the way to Hannibal's house in the snow. Hannibal takes care of the aftermath.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

Chapter 1

The snow was still coming down hard, the white flakes swirling past Hannibal's window in slow, hypnotic spirals. It really was beautiful. Hannibal didn't care much for the cold, but he appreciated watching the winter weather from a warm, comfortable setting.

He settled back before the roaring fire, relishing in the heat it gave off, a glass of wine held lazily in his right hand, which he occasionally brought to his lips to take a small sip. Merlot, one of his favourites.

The tranquil ambience was rudely interrupted by the shrill sound of the doorbell.

He sighed. He had just sat down for the evening, tired after a long day of delving into his patient's menial problems, his body slowed further by the digestion of his dinner - Liver and bacon sauté, the organ kindly provided by a rather rude plumber Hannibal had the misfortune of meeting some months ago.

He pulled himself up, making his way somewhat sluggishly toward the front door. Whoever it was, he planned to send them on their way so he could get an early night.

"Yes." He said as he pulled the door open, letting in the frigid evening air.

Will Graham stood on his doorstep, eyes lidded slightly and his mouth hanging slack. He was clothed in only a white t-shirt and loose jogging pants. A quick glance down informed Hannibal of the man's lack of shoes, toes angry and red.

He had been sleepwalking, and he was still in dead sleep.

"Will." He said sharply, tiredness forgotten, replaced instead by concern for his friend. "Will, wake up."

Will didn't stir, which Hannibal found to be even more concerning. He grabbed the man by his shoulders and tugged him inside, the snow that had settled on Will's frame was shaken loose and fell onto Hannibal's carpet. He gave it a fleeting glance, if he left it the water would dry and stain, but he couldn't let the FBI's best consultant die of hypothermia on his doorstep. He was a doctor after all.

Will walked with no resistance as Hannibal steered the sleeping man towards his living room. He sat Will down in the chair facing the fire and knelt down in front of him. "Will." He tried again, reaching up and giving the stubbled cheek a light slap. "You need to wake up."

Will blinked sluggishly, his eyes focusing and he slowly came back to reality. His gaze settled on Hannibal's face directly in his line of sight. He frowned, confused. "Hannibal?" He questioned, voice cracked.

"It's me." Hannibal confirmed, helping guide Will steadily back to reality.

Will blinked rapidly, lifting his head to look around. His eyes widened slightly in fear. "Where am I?" He whispered.

"You are in my home." Hannibal told him gently. "Do you remember how you got here?"

"I…" Will trailed off, his gaze coming back to settle on Hannibal's face once more, not quite making eye contact. "No. I don't."

"You were sleep walking." Hannibal stood, pulling the draw to his mahogany chest open and taking out a heavy, plaid blanket which he wrapped around Will's shoulders, drawing it across his front and encouraging Will to hold on to it. "You are suffering from hypothermia."

"Shit." Will cursed, closing his eyes again. "I'm sorry, Hannibal."

"There's no need for apologies." Hannibal said gently. "I'm just glad you came here."

"I must've walked all the way from my house." Will mumbled, running a hand down his face. "Fuck."

"Do you remember what time you fell asleep?" Hannibal asked.

Will frowned. "No." He shifted slightly in his seat, wincing slightly at the unsurprising discomfort he was in. "It was early, I remember that. I wasn't feeling too well."

"The cold will have exaggerated any symptoms you were having, no doubt. If you will allow me to, I would like to give you a medical examination. You must have been walking for a number of hours, barefoot in the snow too. You might have frostbite."

Will grimaced, wiggling his toes. No doubt the feeling was beginning to crawl back into them. "I wouldn't be surprised." Will gave a humourless chuckle.

"Before that though, I will bring you a hot drink. How does cocoa sound? You'll need the sugar."

"Cocoa sounds delightful." Will said. "Thank you, Hannibal."

Hannibal gave a small nod before existing the room and making his way down the long hallway to his kitchen. He needed to be relatively quick – he couldn't leave Will alone for long, especially not in his current state. He wouldn't have time to make hot chocolate from scratch, he would have to use instant powder and boiling water. The thought made him grimace.

He boiled the kettle, fishing around in his cupboard for a mug that wasn't all that precious to him. It was likely Will wouldn't be able to hold anything properly until his fingers healed, or at least warmed up. There was always the possibility he could drop it. He chose a mug right at the back of the cupboard, adorned with an obnoxiously bright polka dot pattern. It was a Christmas gift from a patient he had received years ago. He didn't care for it at all.

He spooned the power into the mug and poured the boiling water over it, stirring it with a teaspoon. With that done, he grabbed a pack of paracetamol from his first aid kit and headed

back into the living room.

Will had sunk off the chair and onto the floor, sat cross legged at the hearth only a foot or so away from the flame. The blanket was wrapped tightly around his shivering frame, his eyes closed.

“Be careful not to burn yourself.” Hannibal warned, kneeling down next to him to place the mug at Will’s side. Will grunted in thanks. “Don’t touch it yet, it’s still hot. You need dry clothes; will you be alright for a few minutes while I fetch you something?”

Will nodded, his teeth chattering too much to speak.

“Don’t go to sleep.” Hannibal warned again.

None of the garments Hannibal owned were anywhere close to the style of clothing Will usually wore, but that wasn’t a concern at that moment. Hannibal picked out an old nightshirt and dug out a pair of sweatpants from the very back of his wardrobe. He was not one for casual clothing. After picking up a clean pair of cotton socks, he made his way back downstairs once more.

Will hadn’t moved since Hannibal had left. He stared into the flames, trying to still the shivers that wracked his body.

Hannibal placed the neatly folded clothes next to the other man. “Do you think you can change on your own?” He asked.

Will shot him a glance. “I’ll try.” He murmured, letting the blanket fall from his shoulders. Goosebumps instantly formed on his upper arms.

Hannibal turned away to give him some privacy, instead going back to the kitchen to pour the rest of the water from the kettle into a bowl, fetching some sterile gauze from his still open first aid kit. When he returned Will was dressed in the clothes Hannibal had provided him, growling in frustration as his fingers fumbled clumsily on the buttons of the shirt.

“Let me.” Hannibal said, kneeling on the floor again and knocking Will’s hands away and began on the first button.

Red spread across Will’s cheeks and he looked away, back into the fire.

“There is no need to be embarrassed, Will.” Hannibal reassured him. “I am a doctor after all.”

“It’s not that.” Will inhaled sharply. “I just… can’t believe I sleepwalked all the way here. Why here anyway?”

“I am your psychiatrist. I provide you with a sense of safety and stability. Or at least I hope so.” He shot Will a wink before sitting back, the last of the buttons done up. “In a time of stress your body sought out safety. What was bothering you Will?”

“I just can’t turn my mind off. I keep thinking like them.” Will huffed. “Sometimes I feel like I’m going crazy. I wasn’t feeling well anyway.”

“You need to dethatch yourself from your work when you arrive home. That’s something we can work on. In the meantime,” Hannibal picked up the mug and held it out to Will. “Drink this. Your fingers may not be able to support the mug, so let me help you.”

Will nodded shakily, wrapping his angry red fingers around the mug. He winced as his sore flesh made contact with the warm ceramic. Will steeled his expression and kept his hold, drinking almost determinedly, as if showing that he could do it independently. Still, Hannibal’s hands hovered nearby just in case Will’s fingers failed him. Cocoa was a stain he had no chance of getting out of his carpet after all.

Once the mug was drained Hannibal set it aside, pulling the bowl of water and gauze towards him. “I need to bathe your wounds. Would you like some painkillers before I begin?”

Will shook his head. “I rely too much on painkillers.” He mumbled.

The corner of Hannibal’s mouth twitched. “I’m glad you have come to that conclusion on your own.”

He dipped the gauze in the water, wringing out the worst of the water and took one of Will’s hands in his. Will winced at the contact.

The skin on his slim fingers and on the back of his palm was beginning to peel, leaving nasty red welts exposing the flesh underneath. Hannibal draped the gauze over the wounds, ignoring Will’s sharp intake of breath. He did the same with the other hand and when he was done he guided his hands down into his lap.

“That’s just to warm them up a little. I’ll properly dress them soon.” Hannibal informed him. “Can you uncross your legs, please?” He gestured towards Will’s feet.

Will swallowed before complying, the blanket shifting off his shoulders as his body moved. Hannibal carefully readjusted it before turning his attention to Will’s feet.

Along with the mild frostbite the soles of the man’s feet were covered in shallow cuts and scrapes, no doubt from the dirt roads on the walk over. Many of the cuts were dirty, tiny pieces of gravel lodged in some of them.

“Will, I need you to sit back on that chair so I can wash your feet, can you do that?” Hannibal asked.

Will nodded, attempting to stand. But without the use of his hands to push him up and his feet to painful for movement he froze, wincing.

Hannibal wrapped Will’s arm around his shoulders, circling his own around the other mans waist and lifted, transporting Will onto the chair within seconds. His history of moving bodies – dead or alive – made him a very strong man, even though at a first glance, he didn’t look it.

Hannibal knelt down at Will’s feet again, picking one up by the ankle and dipping it into the bowl, the water now lukewarm. It didn’t stop Will from crying out, however, his foot

flinching away from the water.

“Will, I must wash your feet. There is dirt in your wounds, they could become infected if we are not careful.”

Will appeared to be considering him for a moment, before giving Hannibal a shaky nod and allowing him to puppet his foot back into the bowl.

Will continuously flinched as Hannibal scrubbed at the bottom of his feet, the water becoming muddy and cloudy with the dirt that was in Will’s flesh. With every jerk of the man’s body the bowl would knock and little tsunamis of water would cascade from the bowl, right onto Hannibal’s carpet. He bit back a sigh.

“I can give you a mild sedative if you would like, Will. I’ll make the experience a lot less painful for you.”

Will closed his eyes and shook his head. “No. The pain is… grounding.”

“Don’t rely on pain to ground you, Will.” Hannibal said with a raised eyebrow. “It can lead to dangerous habits.”

“I won’t.” Will assured him.

Once Hannibal was satisfied the wounds were clean, he dried Will’s feet with a sterile towel and dabbed at the now pink flesh with antiseptic. Once that was done he bandaged the limbs and did the same with Will’s hands.

“Thank you, Hannibal.” Will mumbled, his eyes drooping. “I’m sorry to burden you with this…”

Hannibal placed a hand flat against Will’s crown, his dark locks tickling his fingers.

“My dear Will, you will never be a burden.” Hannibal assured the younger man. “As your psychiatrist and your friend, I sincerely hope you come to me with your problems.”

Will’s lips twitched up slightly.

Hannibal glanced at the clock – it was almost eleven pm. Though Will had obviously recently slept he seemed to be nodding off where he sat. Hannibal figured the worst of the hypothermia had passed and it was safe to let the man sleep.

“You can take one of the guest rooms.” Hannibal informed him, draping Will’s arm around his shoulders once again. “Luckily there is one on the ground floor, so we will not need to struggle up the staircase.”

“Hmmm. Good.” Will slurred, his head lolling to one side, inches away from Hannibal’s shoulder. The doctor couldn’t help but catch the other man’s scent – the sweet aroma of fever and exhaustion, and layered underneath the sharp smell of cheap aftershave.

Will was all but slumped against him once they reached the bedroom and Hannibal struggled to open the door whilst supporting the majority of the other man's weight. He deposited Will on the bed before retreating to flick the light switch.

Hannibal pulled out the duvet from underneath Will's limp body, earning a grunt from the other man. He tucked it around his form, brining the comforter up over his shoulders. Will's weak hands gripped the edges, pulling the duvet tighter around him and sinking into its warmth.

"Sleep well, Will." Hannibal said softly, resting a comforting hand on Will's shoulder for a few moments.

"Mmmmm." Will hummed, already sinking into a deep sleep. "Night, Hannibal."

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will awoke the next morning with a pounding headache and his limbs felt like lead. He groaned, rolling onto his side, plastering his face in the pillows next to his head.

It took a while for him to register his surroundings. He was not at home. The first tip-off was the smell of the pillow. Instead of the combination of his usual musk, dog and wood shavings there was the unmistakable scent of Hannibal Lecter. He furrowed his brows in confusion. Why was he smelling Hannibal? And more importantly, when had he become so familiar with the doctors' scent to be able to recognise it instantly?

He opened his eyes, but immediately screwed them tightly shut again. The thin sliver of light that crept through the closed curtains burning his retinas. His entire body ached, and his feet and fingers stung.

Ah.

He remembered opening his eyes to the concerned face of Doctor Lecter, a roaring fire behind him and the unforgivable cold. He had sleepwalked here, made an absolute mess of himself in the process and had relied on Hannibal to piece him back together again.

He groaned, bringing his hands to his face to rub at his eyes.

"You're awake."

Will squinted against the hard light to see Hannibal standing in the doorframe carrying a tray set out with a plate of food and a tall glass of water.

"Morning." Will grunted, attempting to pull himself up the bed, but gave up with a gasp of pain, his fingers reminding him of their neglect.

"Let me." Hannibal said, coming over to sit on the edge of the bed, setting the stands of the tray on either side of Will's legs. He took Will's arm, helping him tug himself up so his head and shoulders were resting against the polished wooden headboard.

"Thank you." Will mumbled.

"You're welcome. I've brought you breakfast. Before you get started however, I would like to check your temperature."

"Go for it." Will said. Hannibal reached over to put the nib of the plastic thermometer in Will's ear, cupping the other side of his face as he did so. Will shivered at the contact.

Once the thermometer beeped, Hannibal brought it up to his line of sight to read the electronic display.

“You have a fever.” He announced.

“I believe you.” Will said, running a hand though his hair. “I feel like utter shit.”

“There seems to be no cause for concern, it looks like the common cold, mild flu at the worst.”

Will chuckled. “Just my luck.”

“Eat.” Hannibal prompted, nudging the silver fork into Will’s limp and injured fingers. Will picked it up gingerly and began to poke at his food. Hannibal ha prepared him a very delicious looking poached eggs and toast, but Will’s stomach was in knots. He took a bite anyway, not wanting to appear rude.

“If it’s ok with you, I would like to keep an eye on you whilst you recover.” Hannibal continued as Will took a sip of water. “If you have another sleepwalking episode in your current state, you may make yourself worse. For my peace of mind, and of course, your well-being.”

“I want to go home.” Will said, but regretted it as soon as the words left his mouth. That had sounded rude and ungrateful.

To his surprise, Hannibal only nodded, an understanding look in his eyes.

“I understand.” He said. “When we are ill we find ourselves craving familiarity and personal comforts.”

“No, I’m sorry. That came out wrong.” He hung his head. “I mean, I do want to go home, but-“

“I understand, Will.” Hannibal repeated. “How about I escort you to your home and treat you there?”

Will looked up again, not quite meeting Hannibal’s eyes, instead staring at his dazzlingly white teeth. “Are you sure? You don’t have to, really, though I’m grateful. What about work?”

“I’ve cancelled all appointments today.” Hannibal told him, “And tomorrow is the weekend. You should be over the worst of your illness by Monday when I will return to work.”

Will nodded, a weight lifted from his shoulders. He had been worrying about being on his own, alone with his thoughts and at the mercy of his unconscious body. What if he sleepwalks again? He could end up seriously hurting himself or, God forbid, other people. Having someone to keep an eye on him was reassuring, but he still couldn’t help but feel a little embarrassed. Weak, even.

“There is nothing to be embarrassed about, Will.” It was as if Hannibal had read his thoughts. “This is the best solution.”

“I’m grateful.” Will said as sincerely as he could around the croak in his throat. “Thank you.”

“It is not a problem at all.” Hannibal smiled softly.

The drive back to Wolf Trap felt much, much longer than it’s one hour. Will sat with his head against the cool glass of the window, willing the world to stop spinning. Each bump in the road sent an uncomfortable jolt though Will’s body. He prayed to whatever God was listening that he wouldn’t throw up in Hannibal’s very expensive car.

It was an immense relief when they pulled up outside Will’s little white house. He opened the door and inhaled the crisp, fresh air. No city smog, just pure oxygen. He felt a little better already.

He still relied on Hannibal to escort him up the few steps to his porch and through the door. At once his dogs burst out to greet him, giving little excited yaps, happy their human had come home. Will was glad he had at least shut the door when he had left the previous night.

Hannibal guided him over to his bed which Will happily sunk onto, resting his head on the pillows and sighing in relief.

“I will make you lunch.” Hannibal said, tucking him into bed for the second time in twenty-four hours. “And bring you some medicine to take. Please, get some rest in the meantime.”

Will didn’t need telling twice as he sunk into welcoming blackness.

The cold bit at his skin and he shivered, bringing his arms up to wrap around himself. It was dark, the grass beneath him wet and dewy. Up ahead of him stood the stag, graceful as always, camouflaged against the blackness, but Will knew it was there. It raised its head, antlers framed against the moonlight that struggled to break past the clouds, and looked directly at him. It was as if it’s eyes were burning into his skin. After a moment, it turned its back on him and began walking deeper into the fog. Automatically, Will followed.

The droplets soaked though his jeans, making him shiver, but still the stag never stopped. He followed it out into a vast empty field. The clouds had parted, letting its light finally shine down to the ground. In front of him, the stag lay dead, the body of a girl impaled on its antlers.

“See?” A harsh voice sounded from behind him. He whipped around and came face to face with Garett Jacob Hobbs, his eyes white and glassy, his torso punctured with bullet holes that still oozed blood into the fabric of his shirt.

Will stumbled back, and then he was falling…

"Will."

Will's eyes flew open and he gasped, air filling his lungs in a rush. Hannibal sat above him, staring into his face, one hand cupping his cheek.

"Sorry." Will gasped, still fighting the panic that gripped his lungs for air.

"You were having a nightmare." Hannibal informed him. "How are you feeling?"

"Ok… I'll be ok…" Will said up with Hannibal's aid and buried his face into his hands, skin clammy with sweat. "I'll be ok."

"You will be." Hannibal's hand was rested on his bicep. "When you're ready I have some soup for you to eat. It'll make you feel better."

Will gave a shaky nod, looking up. His head was pounding. As if sensing his discomfort, Hannibal held out his palm where two white disks sat. Aspirin. Will accepted the medicine this time, swallowing them dry.

A bowl of green liquid rested on the tray sat on Hannibal's lap. It looked disgusting, which is something Will never thought he's say about any of Hannibal's cooking.

"I know it doesn't look appetising, but it has the necessary ingredients to ensure you a speedy recovery."

Will took the spoon in weak, bandaged fingers and took a sip of the soup. He had to immediately restrain himself from gagging, instead he coughed, eyes watering.

"Sorry." Will spluttered.

"No offence taken." Hannibal said calmly. "This is not a dish I would serve at dinner."

"I can see why." Will said, wiping the moisture from his eyes.

"Please do ensure that you finish the entire bowl. It will do you good."

Will nodded, dipping the spoon back into the soup and taking another mouthful, cringing against the foul taste. It took him a while, partly due to his injuries but also the foul-tasting mix, but he was able to finish the bowl.

"Well done, Will." Hannibal said, lifting the tray from his lap and making his way out of the room. Will grimaced at the praise – it was like he was a child. Although, at that very moment he did feel vaguely like a child. He just wanted to curl up under his duvet and hide away from the world until his head had stopped pounding and he actually had energy in him limbs. But the nightmare still played on his mind. He didn't want to sleep, but he did so, so badly.

He was vaguely aware of Hannibal re-entering the room. He felt the bed dip from the weight of the other man as he sat down next to Will's curled up form.

“A sedative.” Hannibal pulled back the duvet, a dropper in hand. Will eyed it cautiously.

“What is it?”

“A blend of natural herbs that will aid you into a dreamless sleep.”

A dreamless sleep, Will wanted nothing more at that moment. “When you say herbs…”

“Yes, it does include marijuana.” Hannibal said, confirming his suspicions. “Purely medicinal, I assure you.”

Will hesitated before nodding, the promise of uninterrupted sleep too tempting to let go. He opened his mouth and let the doctor place a few drops under his tongue.

“Could you stay?” Will asked, not looking the doctor in the face. “Until I fall asleep?” It was a childish thing to ask, but Will really didn’t want to be alone.

Hannibal smiled softly. “Dear Will, I’ll stay for as long as you need.”

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading!

End Notes

The NHS website didn't have much on how to treat frostbite, surprisingly. So I'm sorry if I've just killed Will's fingers.

Next chapter will be up sometime tomorrow. Hannigram prompts welcome!

Ko-fi: https://ko-fi.com/deadrockchariot

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